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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 002010

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FR, GM, JA, UK, AF

SUBJECT: BEIJING-BASED G-5 CHIEFS OF MISSION ON EARTHQUAKE
RECOVERY, SINO-JAPAN RELATIONS, DALAI LAMA, OTHER ISSUES

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson.
Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) At the regular meeting of G-5 ambassadors in Beijing, the Japanese Ambassador reported that PRC President Hu Jintao has taken personal ownership of Sino-Japanese relations and made the final decision to travel to Japan over the opposition by some in the Chinese Government. Ambassador Miyamoto said that the joint statement issued after the visit shows that China may be interested in moving beyond history issues. The Japanese interpret early PRC acceptance of a Japanese earthquake rescue team as another sign of warming relations. The French Ambassador expressed the view that President Hu, to avoid looking weak on the Tibet issue, is linking PRC willingness to talk to the Dalai Lama to similar policies of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. End Summary.

Participants

2. (C) The Ambassador hosted Japanese Ambassador Yuji Miyamoto, UK Ambassador William Ehrman and French Ambassador Herve Ladsous May 23 for the regular G-5 gathering of Beijing-based Chiefs of Mission. The German Ambassador was unable to attend.

Earthquake Relief Assistance

3. (C) Ambassador Miyamoto reported that shortly after the May 12 Wenchuan earthquake, the Japanese Government presented China with a list of resources it could provide to assist in the relief effort. The Chinese, he said, immediately agreed to accept the material items on the list, but initially declined the offer of a Japanese rescue team. Miyamoto claimed that Chinese civil relief authorities accepted the Japanese offer of assistance only after Chinese MFA prodding, an act that Miyamoto called a "polite gesture" in line with the positive trend in relations highlighted by President Hu's recent trip to Japan. He noted that the rescue team's efforts had received a great deal of positive press attention in China. The Chinese also accepted a Japanese medical team, but the team has seen few patients at the Chengdu hospital to which it was assigned.

4. (C) French Ambassador Ladsous said that the chairman of the French chain store Carrefour, which came under public criticism following the troubled torch relay in Paris, made a

significant donation to the relief effort. He added that the French Government had offered China a "complete field hospital," including medicines and doctors, but China rejected the offer. Ambassador Ladsous ventured that the Chinese are interested in material offers that can be integrated into their own efforts but not in self-contained operations that might be outside their control.

Hu Driving Positive Trend in Japan Relations

15. (C) Ambassador Miyamoto reported that during the planning for President Hu's recent trip to Japan, the Chinese Government was unsure if the visit should go forward and was in fact considering cancelling the trip due to negative Japanese sentiments over the Chinese-made dumplings food safety scandal and Tibet. He stressed that President Hu himself made the decision to go. He said that Hu exceeded Japanese expectations for the trip and that China had been very cooperative in preparing for the visit. For example, while the two sides did not reach agreement on the substance of the Japanese proposal on climate change, the Chinese took a positive attitude on the thrust of the proposal.

16. (C) Ambassador Miyamoto said that Hu's "gift" of pandas to Japan generated a great deal of goodwill among the Japanese people, especially since a beloved panda at Ueno Zoo in Tokyo passed away the week before. Another positive note was that the Chinese did not raise history issues during the visit, a first in recent Sino-Japan relations.

Moving Past the History Issues?

BEIJING 00002010 002.2 OF 002

17. (C) Ambassador Miyamoto stressed that the joint statement issued after the visit contained a passage that for the first time put the focus on the post-WWII era as opposed to war-time Japan, an inclusion that the Japanese interpret as a move by the Chinese to put "the history issue" behind them. Miyamoto said that previously the Chinese were unsure whether Japan would remilitarize, but now they are positively evaluating Japan's peaceful post-war contribution to the international community. He added that this would represent a reversal of decades of Chinese reservations about Japanese power. Miyamoto claimed that Hu was criticized by hawks in China for being soft on the Taiwan issue and for failing to stress the history issue with the Japanese. After Hu's visit, Chinese state-run media made the case that Hu's overture with the Japanese represents a continuation of the approach of former paramount leader Deng Xiaoping. Miyamoto opined that Hu recently took personal ownership of the China-Japan relationship. He stressed, however, that despite the recent overtures, the political winds could change at any time.

Dalai Lama

18. (C) UK Ambassador Ehrman reported that he met with Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi May 19 to express condolences for the victims of the Wenchuan earthquake, and that in a pull-aside after the meeting he was warned about the planned May 23 meeting between Prime Minister Gordon Brown and the Dalai Lama in London. French Ambassador Ladsous noted that when the Dalai Lama was made an honorary citizen of the city of Paris, he was summoned by the MFA at 2 a.m. on a Saturday to receive Chinese representations on the issue. He noted that a recent article in the Chinese journal "Seeking Truth" (Qiu Shi) underscored Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping's willingness to meet with the Dalai Lama, presumably to provide context for the Government's newly restarted dialogue with the Dalai Lama. The French view this argument as an effort by President Hu to show that he is not capitulating to the Dalai Lama but rather is continuing previous policies.

Tibetan Youth Congress Members in Beijing?

¶9. (C) Ambassador Ladsous said that French security officials were told during consultations with their Chinese counterparts that 41 non-PRC-citizen members of the Tibet Youth Congress, which China considers a terrorist organization, are currently in Beijing. Eleven have been arrested, but China remains concerned about the 30 that remain at large, Ladsous said.

Afghanistan Paris Conference

¶10. (C) Ambassador Ladsous reported that he and the Afghanistan Ambassador Eklil Ahmad Hakimi jointly met with AFM Liu Jieyi to encourage Chinese participation in the June 12 Paris donor support conference for Afghanistan. AFM Liu responded that Foreign Minister Yang is likely to attend the conference and that FM Yang would probably meet bilaterally with FM Kouchner.

Anti-Tibetan Moves, Sarkozy Olympic Attendance, French-PRC Mil-Mil Relations

¶11. (C) UK Ambassador Ehrman reported that all Beijing hotels have been instructed by local officials to refuse to lodge Tibetans. He noted separately that the UK is disappointed with China for being unwilling to put pressure on the regime in Burma. French Ambassador Ladsous said that President Sarkozy had not yet made a decision to attend the Olympics, but did visit the Chinese Embassy in Paris to express condolences over the Wenchuan earthquake. Ladsous also noted that he spoke recently with French pilots in China on a mil-mil exchange who had been permitted to fly Chinese JF-7s. PICCUTA